

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

SOUTHEAST REGION

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 16, 2000
SERO NR00-056

NOAA ANNOUNCES HABITAT RESTORATION GRANTS FOR 2000

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service awarded \$139,900 worth of grants for three community level habitat restoration projects designed to improve a variety of marine habitats important to fisheries in the Southeast.

"Every year since 1996 NOAA Fisheries has been able to maximize the impact of its Community-Based Restoration Program funding by partnering with local organizations and state agencies across the nation. These public-private partnerships are essential to our mission, and the communities that get behind them are one of our most important allies in the restoration of marine habitats," said Fisheries Administrator Penny Dalton.

The grants were awarded directly through NOAA Fisheries' Community-Based Restoration Program. Staff from the NOAA Restoration Center, NOAA Fisheries Science Centers and regional staff work closely with communities to aid in project development and implementation. Projects are monitored and maintained by communities, promoting stewardship and a heightened appreciation for the environment and its well-being.

South Carolina

- NOAA awarded a \$60,000 grant to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources in Charleston County. The goal of this project is to establish multiple small-scale demonstration projects for creation, restoration and enhancement of American oyster habitat and evaluate restoration success through a volunteer-based monitoring program.

Florida

- NOAA awarded a \$50,000 grant to the Florida Keys Environmental Restoration Trust Fund in Monroe County. The goal of the project on Egret Island is to remove invasive vegetation, adjust coastal marsh elevations, restore tidal flow to the filled creeks and remove berms formed by the bridge approaches to restore historic hydrology and return fish habitat to seagrass nursery and feeding areas.

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- NOAA awarded a \$29,923 grant to Nova Southeastern University in Broward County. The goal of this habitat project is to restore and protect a portion of the natural coral reef off Broward County, by removing waste tires previously deployed as part of an artificial reef. This project is designed to rescue corals currently growing on the tires and to prevent further damage to fish habitat on the live coral reef system caused by the continued movement of loose tires.

The NOAA Community-Based Restoration Program has been working with community organizations since 1996 to support effective habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine and riparian areas across the nation. To date, 166 projects in 24 states have been implemented using NOAA funding and leveraged funding from five major restoration partners, including the American Sportfishing Association's FishAmerica Foundation, Restore America's Estuaries, the Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the National Fisheries Institute.

For more information on the NOAA Community-Based Restoration Program, go to:
www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration.

This and other Southeast Regional news releases and fishery bulletins are available on the region's Internet home page: <http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov> or NOAA's Internet home page, <http://www.noaa.gov/public-affairs/press2000.html>.

NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The agency conducts scientific research and provides services and products to support fisheries management, fisheries development, trade, and industry assistance, enforcement, and protected species and habitat conservation programs.

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